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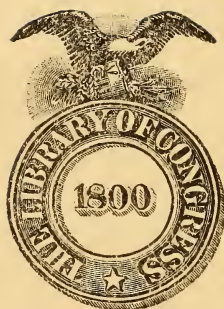
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1921

# *SONGS OF THE WORLD*



*PERCIVAL B. COBB*



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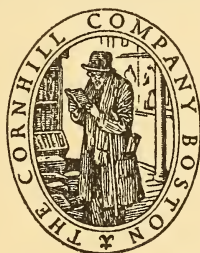




# Songs of the World

By PERCIVAL B. COBB

*Author of "The Call of Honor," "Lilies of the Valley,"  
"The Son of Man," "The Martyr's Return,"  
etc., etc.*



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no 1 -

## INTRODUCTION

These poems are songs of the world. They are not local. They speak for themselves.

There is a touch of Edgar Lee Masters in them—it would be ridiculous to deny the fact.

Forms are limited, and we do better to use a previously invented form than to spend our time vainly endeavoring to invent a new. Shall we hesitate to use a pail in which to pick this season's berries just because somebody used the same pail last year and two years ago?

P. W. W.





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# SONGS OF THE WORLD

## PART I

### THE SONG OF THE AUTHOR

I sing of Truth, in varying cadencies,  
In various ways and styles—  
Hot-hearted, cool-brained—  
Master of myself  
As far as a man can be master of himself,  
Amuser of the silly world,  
Yet teacher, too,  
But always slave to Truth.  
Hers are the thoughts—  
My part, the twanging of the lyre.  
And this is mine, the author's, song.  
You people do what you want with yours;  
But let me play upon my instrument  
And accompany Truth just as I please.  
When I am done, why then you may begin:  
One at a time goes best.  
Do not expect me to rip out of my throat  
An endless extemporaneous string of perfect  
verses—  
Only the liars do that.  
Sometimes we have to throw off polished stuff,  
Merely to make the children happy

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

And let them know that we can do it if we like;  
But rough and ready is our usual style—  
Suits best our nature,  
Truth's and mine.  
Don't think that what I sing is all about myself,  
For it is not.  
I assume, like an actor, different parts,  
Playing now the satirist,  
With curling, disdainful, sneering lips,  
And discordant notes  
That jar the very spinal cord  
Of some who come to listen and pay nothing  
(Sponges with seaweed still sticking to them);  
Now the spouter of allegory;  
Now and then the lover, the optimist,  
The sage, philosopher, business-man,  
Soldier, honest man, fakir, liar and fool;  
And then again the cynic,  
Twanging away like Nero when Rome was  
burnt.  
So many parts I play, but always in time with  
Truth.

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

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### THE WORLD

I am the world.  
I give and take, but mostly take.  
My time is given free,  
But then I take it back again with usury.  
I bear and kill, but mostly kill.  
My bosom nourishes, but it buries too—  
Buries in the crumbling dirt.  
Though a child of Fate,  
I am a fateful and fatal mistress.  
I produce infants just to play with them.  
Those who give in to me I scorn,  
And all who oppose I torture slowly.  
My ways are plain, yet past all finding out.  
Why am I then not a cruel mother?  
Some of my children I love best—  
They are the geniuses.  
And them I crucify!

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

### CHANT OF THADDEUS PLAYTON, PHILOSOPHER-POET

They call me lazy,  
Because I do not prance around  
Like a curious, mischievous monkey,  
And keep a-doing something all the time  
With my feet and hands.  
Is the 'handy man'  
The standard they judge me by?  
Why should I rise at four in the morning  
Because my nearest neighbor,  
A fussy, nervous fellow full of fidgets,  
Gets up at half-past three and boasts of it?  
While they are puttering at this and that,  
I take my necessary sleep,  
Or sit in pleasant solitude,  
Or stretch myself out on the grass  
And think of serious things.  
What do they know of thought?  
Their brains are in their feet.  
Why, let them call me what they like—  
Provided they leave me in peace  
To solve Life's problems  
And study out future courses.  
Some day those smart ones will pass away  
Like faded journals ten years out of date  
That no one ever reads:  
But I and my thoughts will always live.



## SONGS OF THE WORLD

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### THE SONG OF DICKY WHITE, THE LITTLE FELLOW

I am a little fellow, I am.  
I never do much myself,  
But I prevent the big men—geniuses, you  
know—  
From boasting about themselves  
Or feeling their oats too much.  
People appreciate me more than them,  
Because what I say seems more reasonable.  
My jealous, narrow, limiting criticism  
Holds those great geniuses down  
Somewhere near our level,  
At least while they are alive;  
That is my service to the world.  
Otherwise how high might they ascend  
And make me and my kind  
Look like two-cent pieces run over by the cars!  
Yes, I hate giants—  
They sort of overwhelm me.  
In the end, you say?  
I guess in the end we both get our deserts;  
But what do I care about that  
When they are dead and cease to bother me?

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

### MY FRIEND THE ARTIST

My friend is an artist.  
He works in a city full of wealth,  
Giving to it his best.  
He is a genius.  
He paints those canvases on which are seen  
Ideals grandly and beautifully described.  
He represents the human face with skill,  
Landscapes, subjects of allegory,  
The swelling sea, religion, patriotism.  
He ekes a scanty living from his work.  
They Jew him down, glad for a little to get a  
lot.  
What do they care for art?  
Not when it costs them money!  
But when he dies, they'll boast of him,  
And say how great he was,  
And how much his canvases are worth.  
Bah! just to think how wealthy is that town  
In which he lives and works,  
And yet how mean!



## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

### WALLACE GREENWOOD, THE SINCERE MAN

I always try to tell the truth,  
However hard it comes;  
But what incentive have I to tell the truth,  
When all around I see but liars?  
Not that I feel better than they,  
But I see more,  
And when they lie, not even knowing it,  
I see it and know them to be liars.  
An honest, truthful lie  
Is the noblest work of a liar:  
But most of them are sinful.  
What shall I do? Tell them the truth?  
And get a kick and sour looks and vengeance?  
Although I'm not responsible  
For all their characters and souls,  
I'd like to lift their burden if I could  
By making them realize the truth.  
But what shall I do?  
And what will they do to me?

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

### CANTICLE OF GERTRUDE BINGLE, THE NOTED MAN'S DAUGHTER

My father was a noted man, and I—  
His eldest daughter, you know—  
Am very proud of the fact.  
I am not extremely good-looking,  
But what difference does that make  
So long as I have brains  
(Begun with *b* like beans)  
And can boast,  
As I often love to do  
When gadding and hobnobbing  
With the wives of my husband's associates  
(He is a professor, you know),  
With the gossips of the club  
Of which I am president,  
And with the haughtiest of my neighbors,  
Whom I squelch properly as is right,  
That I am the daughter  
Of the late Gingle Bingle?  
And what difference does it make  
That I am a jealous female  
With a bitter tongue?

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

### THE AUTHOR AGAIN

This world is a beautiful world  
For all who make it beautiful.  
But for others it is a crazy world.  
Full of mischief and deviltry,  
Vague, bleak, incomprehensible,  
A mystery never understood,  
A place of torment unspeakable  
Overshadowed by a bitter end,  
A mocker of many pleasures planned,  
Choker of spindly ambitions,  
A grab-box filled with disappointments.  
Whose fault is it?

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

### FRANCIS CLARK, THE HAPPILY MARRIED MAN'S LYRIC

All people have to relieve their minds  
Once in a while,  
And have a friend who will listen.  
I found that most of what I said  
Went off on its rounds  
Through the town,  
Like the 'Last Leaf'—  
To be laughed at!  
Then I got married,  
And now I have a faithful wife—  
Dear woman!—  
Who is my special *confidante*, and repeats nothing.  
What a difference  
One true friend of such a kind  
Will make in a man's life!

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

### FRITZ JUNKER

I have a cup, from which I drink.  
It's black from wear,  
Just like those cocoanut-shells  
They use in Porto Rico  
To drink their milk and water from;  
Contains but dirty dregs;  
Has hairs on the outside,  
Like the cocoanuts before being husked;  
Leaks considerably,  
But I fix that by putting my fingers over the  
    cracks  
To stop them up and keep them from being  
    seen;  
Is dirty inside as well as out,  
But I am not fussy about that;  
Has the likeness of a human face  
(From which some Germans say God's face was  
    made)  
Smirched on the outside—  
Lips, nose, ears, eyes, and so forth,  
Painted on for effect;  
This cup is empty most of the time:—  
It is my head.

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

### JENNIE SMART

My song is worth hearing  
Because of my superiority.  
My parents endowed me with truly a wonderful  
mind,  
Which I make use of still more wonderfully.  
I went to school when I was young,  
And pride forced me to study hard—  
Pride and female vanity.  
Not that I had to do it,  
But just to show poor little Susie White,  
Christopher Blunt, Carrie Slow, Johnnie Dull  
And the other stupid ones, whose brains  
Were not, like mine, absorbent sponges,  
That they were nothing at all compared with  
me.  
My vanity was just like space—no limit to it!  
But I would never believe that,  
Being a woman.  
My teachers praised me, and sent home high  
marks,  
So I am proud as a peahen all my days.  
But what do my days amount to?

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

### MARK PAIN, THE PESSIMIST

How they ever came to name me  
As they did, I don't know.  
I hate my name like poison;  
And often I hate myself,  
And then I end by hating everybody.  
By nature I am very touchy—  
Sensitive is much the nicer word,  
And I never like to be opposed by any one.  
I haven't got so far in the world  
As a man of my ability should,  
Because my genius is not recognized.  
I'll pay the world back before I die  
With green-eyed vengeance.  
If I could keep from over-eating  
My health would be much better,  
But somehow I can't help it—  
No doubt because of my strong will.  
What does life amount to, anyhow?  
I can't see much in people—  
They are a superficial lot.  
I am about the only person worth anything.



## SONGS OF THE WORLD

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### HIGH MUCK-A-MUCK

I am great High Muck-a-Muck,  
Proud as a goose or downy duck.  
I am a nabob, nothing less,  
As fine as they make them, I confess.  
I can dance a jig as nice as you please,  
And I can side-step with great ease.  
I fox-trot, too, and tango back  
(This backward stepping is a knack).  
I spit out small-talk by the reams—  
No depth to it—and in my dreams  
I write perfumed society notes  
To mules and donkeys and to goats.  
My time and words and paper are cheap,—  
A piffling man's as good as a deep.  
I wear fine clothes and dress up swell  
To keep my soul from going to hell.  
I'll be in honor when I die,  
And they will praise me up to the sky:  
"A wonderful man," the people will say,  
"How he could chatter, and act, and play!  
He could wriggle, and wroggle, and twist, and  
duck—  
Oh, he was a great high muck-a-muck!"



## SONGS OF THE WORLD

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### MAXIMILLIAN MUTTERNICHT

When it comes to singing about oneself,  
I, the Austrian, can do it well—  
Mainly on account of my pride.  
My voice isn't much,  
But haughtiness makes up for voice.  
For centuries my ancestors  
Were rulers of the world,  
And God! didn't they rule it hard!  
A cruel lot—my ancestors,  
From whom I have inherited  
My cruelty, my strongest talent.  
Who is as great as an Austrian?  
Why should we not stamp down  
Our neighbors?  
And torture them to please our pride?  
What is pride for if not to satiate?  
Whether our pride has any connection  
With these our sufferings and woes,  
I can not say, not being a prophet.  
I only know that I am proud  
Of my inheritance.

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

### LIFE

Why shouldn't I sing, too?  
I can't stand to sit, and be outdone  
When it comes to talking or singing,  
On account of being so jealous,  
Like Man, that human animal  
That walks on two feet instead of four.  
Like the female half of Man,  
Who uses her clapper  
To drown out her better part  
Even though she has nothing to say,  
Just so am I, Life.  
What am I? a riddle.  
Where did I come from?  
I've heard that question so often  
That now I'm sick of it—  
Answer it yourself, if you can.  
What do I amount to?  
To most people, very little.  
Where am I going?  
Well, it's very plain to me  
That you don't know much,  
And never will, I'm afraid.  
Tooraloorahoo!  
It makes me laugh  
To see how easily I can fool people.  
As I said, I am a puzzle,

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

And only those who can unlock me  
Can make any use of me—  
And they  
Are not many!

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

### THE SKY'S SONG

I am the Sky—enveloping the World.  
Think no ill of me, but only good of me.  
For I work always for Man's best welfare,  
However it may seem to him.  
I have strange moods,  
I must confess,  
But I am ever the same—the same, same Sky!  
Is it not wonderful to be thus—  
The same, yet ever changing?  
In appearance fickle, but faithful to the god?  
That is, to my god:—  
For what have I to do with Man's idolatries?  
When I am gray I am sullen—  
Sullen to be the butt  
Of Man's—ugh! syphilitic eyes  
And pestilential breath.  
When I am black I am angry—  
Angry at Man's wickedness and evil.  
I often strike, and blast, then,  
With my scourging thunderbolts,  
Whips for the wicked.  
When I am blue I am sad—  
Sad for the foolishness of Man,  
Sad to see how he deceives himself  
With empty shapes:  
Mistaking artificiality for beauty,

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

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Brutality for strength,  
Sexual selfishness for love,  
Mercenary shrewdness for greatness,  
Fine mansions for homes,  
Notoriety for honor,  
Memory for lofty thought,  
New clothes for high ideals,  
Mechanical prowess for deity,  
Speed for life,  
And church religion for spirituality.  
At night I let the stars shine through,  
So Man can see how small he is;  
But he is blind to that—  
Blind to everything but flattery.  
Oh! I know Man better than he knows himself.

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

### THE SONG OF THE SWALLOW

No matter what my evolution was,  
I'm now a bird,  
Have wings with which I fly,  
And spend the greater part of my days  
Sailing through the air—  
That lovely, liquid sea of air  
That intoxicates but never drowns.  
Tu-wit tu-woo tu-wee tu-wi—  
I move my wings, and thus I fly  
Across the wind-blown reach of sky;  
Leave me my freedom, or I die —  
Tu-wit tu-woo tu-wee tu-wi!  
What is clumsy Man to me,  
The graceful, flitting bird?  
What to me are all the heavy animals  
That plod about in dirt and dust  
On tired hands and feet  
Or in their awkward wagons?  
I laugh at them—I scorn them!  
I turn and wheel above them  
Derisively.  
Once in a while I see a comrade  
Touched to the death  
By Man's hot speaking tube,  
But I am cautious, and keep away from it.  
I have no love for Man—

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

I trust him not!  
And oh! how glad I am  
That I am not an Auk—  
A great American Auk!  
Tu-wit tu-woo tu-wee tu-wi—  
I stretch my wings, and swiftly fly  
Across the liquid reach of sky;  
Leave me my freedom, or I die—  
Tu-wit tu-woo tu-wee tu-wi!

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

### THE SONG OF THE VALLEYS

We lie between the mountains and the hills,  
Verdant, full of fruit, and fertile,  
Peaceful and calm  
Except when the spring floods come  
With a rush to frighten Man  
And cover the Earth with more fertility.  
We love the mountains  
Because we admire them—  
They fill us with awe;  
They rise above us like giants,  
And over shadow us entirely:  
But we are not jealous of them—  
Why should we be?  
If we were lofty mountains,  
We could not be the valleys!  
We do our part in the world,  
And are very happy.  
Some day of course  
We may be changed to mountains  
By a terrible upheaval,  
But till then we shall remain  
Contented, peaceful, fertile valleys.



## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

### FIRE-SONG

I have existed from the Beginning,  
If there ever was a beginning,  
And will endure until the end of Time,  
If there will be an end of time.  
I was doing my work with regularity  
Billions and billions of aeons—  
Nay, trillions upon sextillions—  
Before that chattering animal called Man  
E'er climbed a tree to escape from snakes.  
Yet I have reason to believe  
He thinks that he invented me!  
He thinks that he controls me!  
Ah ha! ah ha! ah ha!  
I sweep across his cities now and then  
To warn him of his mistake,  
And lay his buildings low,  
And make things desolate.  
I burn his little shacks called houses  
And drive him gasping out of doors  
In the dead of night, light-clad or naked,  
To show him who's his master.  
A servant, I? ah ha! ah ha! ah ha!  
I helped to civilize the brute  
By cooking his earth-grown food  
And giving him heat to warm his body;  
But what has it all amounted to?

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

Cooking and heat have made him degenerate,  
So now he's worse than when a hairy ape—  
At least, many specimens of him.  
I love to creep in on him unawares  
And frighten him half to death,  
And consume to very ashes  
The place wherein he lived  
And plotted so much evil!  
His wicked thoughts and deeds  
Do not escape my eye—ah ha! ah ha!  
For I am one of the everlasting deities.  
For billions and billions of aeons—  
Nay, trillions upon sextillions—  
After he has disappeared  
Like the bison he cruelly exterminated,  
I will be roaring and shouting my songs—  
Ah ha! ah ha! ah ha!

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

### ENTHUSIASTIC SAMMY SORT OF SINGS

It is a wonderful pleasure  
To travel across the water  
And see some other countries  
In this beautiful world,  
While defending our fatherland  
Against an invasion of cultured and civilized  
savages.

The monuments of Britain  
Fill me with awe;  
And France is full of inspiration.  
I have often longed to go abroad,  
But never had the opportunity.  
Now comes the chance,  
And I am going to make the most of it.  
Come on, boys, start 'er up—  
Three cheers for the Allies!

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

### THE PARABLE OF THE OAK

I was a tree in the open. I stood alone.  
The winds blew hard against me,  
Shaking my branches to test them  
And give them strength.  
Once came a hurricane  
That wanted to tear me up by the roots,  
But I was strong, and only laughed,  
Although I had a struggle to hold my own.  
Yet all my comrades were not enemies:  
The sunshine came to make me flourish,  
To help my little leaves perform their task  
Of getting and giving energy,  
And brought great happiness to me,  
And I was very grateful;  
The rain brought moisture for my roots  
When they were thirsty—  
Life-blood for them,  
And also washed my dusty leaves;  
The zephyrs and south-winds came  
Caressingly, laden with love,  
And played about me and with me,  
Giving me exercise and inspiration.  
The birds approached me trustingly,  
And sang their songs of joy to me,  
Mated, builded their nests,  
And reared their little families

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

Protected by my noble foliage;  
And in my shade the sheep and cattle found relief.

My heart was large and strong,  
My limbs were gnarled with heavy knots,  
My roots went deep and made a heavy base  
For me to stand upon and reach.

I was a wonderful tree.

But then the chattering squirrels came,  
And chewed my heart out;

The little boys built fires in my trunk;  
And finally a farmer came

And chopped me down for fire-wood.

Yet some of my acorns sprouted,  
And other oaks—my children—are growing big.  
This is my life in parable and song.

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

### SONG OF THE PIGMY

In the depths of the forest I live,  
As happy as any man,  
Getting much more than I give—  
Getting as much as I can!  
I climb into a tree  
With arrows and a bow,  
And shoot at all I see—  
Beings that come and go.  
My arrows are poisoned, too—  
Tipped with my deadliest hate,  
That carries incurable death into  
People that look too late.  
I am a savage, yes,  
And dwell in the forest, apart  
From people who carefully dress  
And gather in the mart;  
But also I represent  
The jealous everywhere  
Who filled to the brim with evil intent  
Spread poison through the air.

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

THOMAS FOX, THE OBSERVER, SPEAKS.

What I have to say will not take long  
Because I am not much  
Of a lyric poet.  
However, what's the odds?  
Better sense in prose  
Than no sense in verse,  
I say.  
If you don't know why,  
It would be a waste of time  
To try to explain it to you—to YOU.  
Well, the average woman is much less decent  
In actuality than in appearance;  
The average man  
Is much more decent in actuality  
Than in appearance.  
It does seem strange,  
But you will understand it  
If you study out by yourself  
The differences in the natures  
Of man and woman.



## SONGS OF THE WORLD

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### THE WAIL OF WALTER, THE BOY

This ain't no age fer boys,  
I kin tell you that!  
Wimmin an' girls are bossin' everythin'  
Nowadays—  
That's what my father said,  
An' you jest bet he knows!  
I saw 'im run frum ma the other day,  
An' I sez to 'im, "Hullo, Pa,  
Whatcher runnin' fer?"  
He eyes me ruther sad like,  
An' then he sez, sez 'e:  
"Was you a-watchin' me, Johnnie?"  
"Course I was, Pa," I sez to 'im.  
"That's right, my boy," sez 'e,  
"Learn yer lessons early,"  
An' then 'e went off coughin.'  
Poor Pa—I pity 'im—  
He ain't no man,  
I kin see that, all right, all right.  
He wouldn't let Ma boss 'im so,  
If 'e was—would 'e, though?  
Pa said when 'e was a boy  
They had some fun on Fourth of July—  
Shootin' off big fire-crackers,  
Pistols, guns, torpedoes, caps, an' cannon,  
An' ringin' bells an' blowin' horns



## SONGS OF THE WORLD

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An' havin' a dandy time!  
'Taint anythin' like that now—  
It's a reg'lar sissy day,  
Fer girls, but not fer boys.  
Ma sez she thinks the wimmin  
Will own this country some day,  
An' run it as they please.  
You jest bet if they do,  
I'll run away an' hide!

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

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### IVAN THE SERF

I have the name of one of the heroes  
Of "Ol' Sylvanus Cobb"—  
As an American poet called him.  
Read about my namesake.  
He lived at a different time from me,  
When Russia was an empire.  
What oh! is Russia now?  
Left to the pitiful protection  
Of treacherous, vain, and cowardly women?  
(Their general knows all about them—  
Ask her, and she will tell you the truth.)  
Oh, why am I so ignorant?  
Oh, why am I so helpless?  
Oh, why am I so miserable?  
God pity me—I am but a serf  
In a lost country  
That's like a maimed and hunted deer  
Attacked by wolves.  
Why is it so? Ask the ruling classes.

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

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### JIM DIRTY-DEALER'S HYMN

The wicked have striven against me,  
But all to none avail,  
Because I had the Lord with me.  
I won the battle  
By shouting very loud  
So that it hurt my enemy's ear,  
And saying bitter things to him  
For to discomfort him.  
Why was he my enemy?  
Because I was jealous of him,  
Since he was better than I  
And got more praise.  
But it all was false—  
He was not better than I,  
As I have triumphed over him  
By the help of the Lord,  
Who always helps the man who calls to him  
No matter how just or jealous.  
I triumphed, oh I triumphed,  
I defeated him  
By underhanded dealings,  
And now I am glad and happy!  
How beautiful it is to triumph!  
How glorious is the Lord,  
Who helped me to victory  
Against my enemy,

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

The man of whom I was jealous  
To such an extent  
That my life was not worth living!  
But I deserve the credit,  
As the Lord only looked on—  
I can not share the credit  
For my wonderful victory—oh, no!  
People of whom I am jealous  
Had best watch out,  
For I am full of victories,  
And am perfectly willing for the Lord  
To look at me while I fight  
My dirty, underhanded battles.

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

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### THE PSALM OF STEVEN OPTIMIST

I thank thee, God, that thou hast made  
The earth and put me on it.  
I thank thee also—even more—  
That thou didst make me wise enough  
To learn  
What kind of a world this is—  
The world of humanity, I mean.  
I thank thee that thou hast ordained Death  
To follow after Life,  
To give us poor fellows a chance  
To get away finally  
From treacherous friends and relatives.  
But most I thank thee, Lord,  
That thou hast so well arranged it  
That we can't hear all that our neighbors  
Say about us.

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

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### FRANÇOIS POILU

It is hard to see my native land,  
Which I so love,  
O'errun with Prussian vermin  
And their allies  
(Really their slaves),  
And made in part their prey.  
Oh, how I loathe the beasts!  
The plague of locusts in Egypt  
Was beautiful compared with this.  
The dirty rodents must be driven back,  
But not with music!  
Shall we not try our best  
To exterminate the worst of them?  
And of the rest  
We must clip their claws and teeth.  
Woe to the poisonous Prussian rats!  
If they must be so filthily destructive,  
Why, shall we not in turn  
Defend ourselves against them with all our  
    might?  
For I believe in the Divine Right  
Of Self Defence.

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

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### TRUEMAN SAGE

I know more  
Than all the rest of the world put together,—  
Not more facts, but truth.  
Yet I dare not say this openly—  
Only in poetry:  
For people hate to hear one say  
That he knows more than they,  
Even if it is so,  
Nay more, because it's so!  
They would not mind so much  
If it wasn't so.  
What do I know?  
What's good for man,  
The very nature of man, naked and bare,  
Stripped of its falsehoods and vanities.  
The mysteries that puzzle others  
Gladden me, because I understand them.  
Other things—but hold—gather your hate,  
And then prepare to listen to me, the Sage.



## SONGS OF THE WORLD

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### THE CRY OF GEORGE BION, MELANCHOLY POET

A terrible longing seized my soul  
And filled it with agony;  
Melancholy overshadowed me  
Laden with cares of all the years.  
Heart-suffocating phantoms from the past  
Hedged me about with shadows—  
Shadows of aspirations unfulfilled,  
The proud heart's labor lost,  
Affections unexpressed and unreturned —  
Happy moments merging into dusk!  
I sobbed with pain,  
Struggled in vain against the shrouding cloud,  
And flung a curse  
Into the gloomy world!

ANTONIO'S SONG

We have not been a modern nation long,  
But spirit makes up for youthfulness.  
What is a youth without spirit?  
Without patriotism?  
And what does that man amount to  
Who never has had to sacrifice  
Something dear for something dearer?  
Take me, O lovely Italy,  
And make of me a stalwart bulwark  
Against thy cruel enemies.  
*Dulce est pro patria moriri,*  
Our Virgil said, and he was right.  
Better for me to die than Italy!  
More beautiful is honorable death  
Than a useless life:  
That is my philosophy.

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

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### PART II

#### THE DEAD MEN'S DUET

A dead man called unto his neighbor,  
Once in a cemetery:—  
“With how much useless fuss and labor  
They set about to bury!”  
“Nonsense!” the other gravely said.  
“I can not but believe  
The trouble is most amply paid  
By the money dead men leave.  
The sexton digs a home for us,  
Quite cosy, in the ground:  
For him the digging is no fuss—  
He’s paid to heave the mound.  
The coffin-maker breathes a sigh  
Of joy whene’er he sells  
A box ridiculously high—  
He loves the funeral bells.  
The oily undertaker draws  
His dollars from the heap,  
Yet though he chuckles and guffaws  
He does appear to weep.  
And what about the weeping heirs?  
How mournful they must be!  
They go about with saddened airs  
Though full of gaiety.”

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

"You're right," called back the other ghost,

"When dead men leave a treasure,  
No matter what the burial cost  
It is an act of pleasure!"

JENNIE BROME'S BURIAL CHANT

They took me through the door  
In a pine-box rude and poor  
    To the dray;  
Then with a jeer and curse  
They shoved me in the hearse  
    And drove away.  
It was a shame and sin  
To see them drop me in  
    Through the snow,  
And hear them throw the stones  
And dirt upon my bones  
    Down below.  
The painters with a laugh  
Marked out an epitaph  
    On some wood:  
'Here lies old Jennie Brome,  
A pauper from the home,—  
    Gone for good.'

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

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### THE DEATH SONG OF JOHN RUSH

I'm cold—my limbs are numb—  
There seems to be no movement in my heart!  
Why, I can not close my eyes!  
Never mind—I'll lie still  
And take things easy.  
It will be a pleasant change for me:  
I never had much time to think before,  
So nervously I rushed from one thing to another.  
I heard a doctor say I died of overwork;  
But one of my relations said—  
I couldn't make out which one,  
Although it sounded like Cousin John,  
Who was interested in mental healing—  
The strongest of all my cousins,  
And the one I trusted most, he was so wise—  
He said I might have lived  
At least a generation longer,  
If I had only taken a rest  
Instead of medicine.  
I don't know—I took the doctor's advice,  
And I suppose they'll pay him from the estate.  
I left about a hundred thousand dollars.  
Hope they don't scrap over it too much.  
Say, this is awfully comfortable!  
Would I change places with Dr. Rich, you ask?

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

Not on your life!  
This sleep is too pleasant to be interrupted.  
With Kinney McKenny, the minister?  
Like h— I would!  
Let him manage his bunch of cats himself.  
With the soldier, or the sage?  
The liar, the honest man, the fool?  
The forward member or the deac—  
Oh, quit it, that's enough!  
I wouldn't change places with any living man.  
You make me nervous—  
Go away, and let me sleep in peace.



## SONGS OF THE WORLD

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### DOCTOR WILDE

I am a doctor—that's what they call me,  
Although at times I am afraid  
I do not deserve the name.  
However, I do not kill as many patients  
As many of my associates.  
I do my best, at least—  
More than they do!  
I am only twenty years behind the times,  
While some of them are thirty and forty,  
And others stupid bunglers,  
And some are ugly brutes  
Who kill the men who contradict them  
Because they contradicted.  
I have had the temptation—  
God help me, so!—  
But thus far I have fought it off.  
I wish I didn't think so much of money!  
But one must live,  
And I am lenient with the poor.  
The other day a patient died—  
I had been giving her strong medicine  
For months and months—  
No wonder she died—ha!  
What's that I said? forget it—I mean,  
Yes, I was saying, there seemed to be  
No hope for her,

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

So I experimented.  
I did my best, but her stomach gave out—  
And her liver and kidneys.  
Lucky for us that our certificate  
Covers the law.  
I know doctors who make experiments  
(Rascally bunglers, they)  
Protected by the name of Science—  
Like men styled Ornithologists  
Who shoot birds just to shoot them,  
But add to the knowledge of the world  
Not the hundredth part of a tittle.  
Lots of little girls and boys go that way.  
But so long as their time had come,  
What then's the odds?

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

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### STATION-AGENT JONES HUMS TO HIMSELF

My position could be a lot worse than it is—  
Good pay, no fear of being fired,  
And lots of time to rest.  
I'm very well satisfied with life—  
Why shouldn't I be?  
Of course I'm pretty busy sometimes,  
Especially when trains come in,  
But that's exciting,  
And stirs my blood.  
It used to be quite dull for me  
Between trains  
Until I found that book that was left  
By somebody in the station—  
'Leaves of Grass' is the title.  
It is a wonderful book.  
And it gives me such wild ideas!  
Some afternoons  
I almost think I hear Walt Whitman  
(He wrote the book, you know)  
Roaring around the water-closet!  
Oh yes, I come in contact  
With a lot of vice,  
But what else could you expect  
Of a railroad station?  
Recently I've kept  
The water-closet key in my office

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

And that does a lot of good;  
But still there's plenty of vice,  
And filth, and germs, and bugs.  
M-hm! I hope I never get contaminated.  
My call—hullo, Westing Hill?  
Freight number 12 on siding?  
Bah! I thought that was Walt Whitman  
Again.

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

### RELIGIOUS JOE'S LYRIC

My father and mother were religious people,  
And like true Christians  
Had me taught in Sunday School  
Some of the rudiments of true faith.  
By the time I was twenty-one,  
The age when I should have been a man,  
They had me trussed like a stuffed fowl—  
A beautiful specimen of awful piety.  
I did not dare to believe anything reasonable,  
Or to dispute a single sacred word  
Of what the minister and S. S. teachers  
Crammed down that little throat of mine  
My parents held open for them.  
It's a wonder it didn't make me sick!  
But, really, I thrived on it  
Like a goat on tin-cans and old paper.  
Too late to change any of it now—it's fixed.  
Say, scrape the inside of my head, will you,  
And see if you can find a little brain?  
I think there must be *something* there.

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

### THE SONG OF KINNEY McKENNY

I am a preacher, I would have you know.  
My preaching is better than my singing,  
But I can sing when I want to,  
Although I'm no Caruso.  
Because I was Scotch, I always longed  
To become a minister,  
So I studied at a theological seminary  
To learn the tricks of the trade,  
Since the ministry is of course  
A trade—a profession— like any other,  
Only a little different.  
Some of the teachers there  
Were fable-huggers, crazy over myths,  
Hanging on to Time  
Like last year's leaves on trees;  
Others were atheistical materialists,  
Specialists in logic and the verbal sciences.  
Between them I lost what religion I had;  
But that didn't trouble me much,  
As I smelt money ahead—  
Money, that cure of Scotchmen's sorrow.  
So I got a church,  
And have been working it ever since.  
Who knows I am not orthodox?  
If a Scotchman can not hide his thoughts,  
Who can?

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

It makes me snicker to see  
How easily I can fool them all.  
With those who might suspect  
I talk the essence of orthodoxy,  
That throws them off the track  
Like a doubling fox the dogs and bitches.  
Often I pray when I go to bed:—  
“O Lord, I thank Thee very much  
That Thou didst not make me like these  
Sheepheads and silly calves,  
Who swallow paper and binding whole,  
But madest me clever—a cunning man—  
Kinney McKenny, a canny Scot!”



## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

### McKENNY'S DAUGHTER JEAN

I can sing with my father,  
Or I can sing alone.  
Perhaps you would prefer a solo,  
Seeing that my father has already sung.  
My life is not so happy as it ought to be:  
You see, I am an old maid  
(At least a maid, tho' not very old),  
With maidenhood intact and blood drying up,  
And getting crankier and crankier every day.  
I try my best to make my father's life  
A burden to him,  
But he is a faithful Scotchman,  
And trifles do not bother him  
So long as the money comes in—  
Why should they?  
Sometimes I blame my father,  
Sometimes I blame my lover—  
I mean the young man who courted me once,  
But of course I never blame myself.  
My lover—I like to call him that—  
Disagreed with my father on theology,  
Being a radical and very sincere.  
Finally I had to choose between them,  
And being Scotch I chose my father  
And let my lover go:  
I was driven to it—don't blame *me*.

THE CHANT OF COURTEOUS GUFFAWS, THE  
FORWARD MEMBER

I am a forward member  
Of the church where the Rev. Kinney McKenny  
preaches,  
And sit in the third pew from front  
(Nobody sits in front of me, except  
When the church is full of evangelism  
Or other eccentricities),  
With my wife and two children.  
By rights I should not go to this church,  
Because it is a Presbyterian Church,  
And I am a Baptist;  
But there isn't any Baptist Church  
In the vicinity—  
Main reason, I am sure, for so much sin  
In town.  
We Baptist wash away our sin—  
Original sin —  
When we are baptised  
With water and with spirit  
(I like spirits the best, and I think  
That the Rev. Kinney McKenny does, too),  
And always after that are free from sin,  
No matter what we do.  
Oh, it pays to be a Baptist!  
You want to know my name? why not?

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

Courteous Guffaws,  
They christened me, for a joke,  
I myself don't think it much of a joke,  
But what can I do about it?  
They fastened it to me by God,  
And I must e'er abide by it,  
Or be in danger of hell-fire,  
Which isn't good for Baptists,  
On account of the water.  
My children were not christened here—  
Not on your life!  
Why, I drove twenty miles  
To have them properly douched in a pond,  
By God!  
(That wasn't swearing, please.)  
See these tickets? orchestra seats in Heaven.  
Sh! these Presbyterians will never get there!

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

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### THE DEACON, WILLIAM FRIDAY'S HYMN

Hallelujah! praised be God!  
I am one of the senior deacons  
In Kinney McKenny's church—I mean my  
church,  
Where McKenny preaches.  
I hate him—jealousy, you know—  
But don't tell anybody about it.  
I would like to be the minister,  
And get the attention of everybody,  
And have his social prestige.  
I make things hard as hell for him  
Behind his back,  
But nobody knows of it,  
Because they respect their senior deacon—  
Ha!  
I hate Courteous Guffaws, too,  
Because he is a forward member,  
And is no Presbyterian.  
He will go to hell, sure, and I am glad.  
He thinks too much of himself, anyway.  
Hallelujah! praised be God!  
Three cheers for the trinity!  
No man here is more orthodox than I,  
Unless it be Kinney McKenny;  
But God will damn him for something, I know!  
For being Scotch, perhaps.

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

I am of English descent, a Yankee now,  
With long, thin face, and thin beaked nose,  
With squinting eyes and a nasty mouth,  
And I can be nasty when I want to be.  
Few know how great I am—  
Better that they don't.  
They don't know how well I could preach,  
either,  
If I had the chance.  
The other deacons are different from me,  
Thank God and his angels!  
They do not have my talents;  
They are nothing but softies—easy marks.  
They live simply, but I in *Haut-ton*,  
Which is French for good society.  
That gives me a chance to look down  
On the scum—plenty of it here in church,  
I dare say.  
Hallelujah! praised be God and I!

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

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### MAMIE HOWLES, THE SOLOIST'S SOLO

If you are singing songs,  
Don't leave me out, please.  
I couldn't endure being slighted!  
Oh no, indeed!  
I must be first, always,  
Because of my talent as a singer.  
When the church-bell  
Claps its heels twice together—  
The double stroke, you know—  
There I am on Sundays sitting in the loft  
Looking as lofty as you please.  
Why shouldn't I?  
Am I not one of the most important people  
In the whole church?  
I think so.  
I lead off the congregational singing  
With a high, shrill voice that jars the roof,  
So fine and loud is it,  
And makes them all stare at me  
In wonder and admiration;  
And in the chants and anthems  
I show myself off beautifully;  
But in the solos I am divine,  
And make every woman in the church  
Most horribly jealous of me—  
More so because I am a beauty, besides.



## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

I like to see them throw cat's eyes at me—  
Stirs me to a high religious fervor,  
And satisfies my female soul  
As nothing else could do!  
When the Rev. Kinney McKenny  
(I believe he is in love with me)  
Stands up to preach,  
He always turns around to me the first,  
And it almost makes me giggle.  
I seldom hear what he says, though,  
On account of my thinking of myself—  
How wonderful I am,  
How well I sing and look,  
And how they are all jealous of me  
(The women, I mean—  
The men, they love me, I know).



## SONGS OF THE WORLD

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### GLADYS POND, THE ORGANIST

Where, pray, do I come in?  
I should be before the soloist, not after,  
As my job is more important than hers.  
She is nothing  
But a dependent upon me.  
They could not have services  
Without me!  
Let them try, if they think otherwise—  
Ha ha! nobody would come.  
It has always seemed to me  
That people come to church  
To hear the music I serve up—  
Both what I play and what I direct,  
For I am musical director  
Besides being organist.  
Good God! how jealous I am  
Of the singers!  
That is the one thing that spoils  
The Sabbath for me,  
But I can't help it—  
I am a musician,  
And I must be jealous or leave off  
Being a musician,  
Which of course I can not do.  
I am jealous of Kinney McKenny, too,  
And wish him bad luck with his job.

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

He is a poor preacher,  
And a poor pastor.  
I seldom get much out of his sermons.  
You say I don't listen to them?  
Well, what if I don't—  
Isn't that my own business?

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

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### SONG OF JULIA STOWTON, ONE OF THE FEMALE MEMBERS

I am a female member  
In Kinney McKenny's orthodox church,  
An old maid.  
I used to teach school,  
But now I have boarders.  
One of my boarders  
Is a Unitarian minister;  
I hate his theology  
Because it is dangerous to ours,  
And I would hate him  
If he wasn't my boarder:  
But his money  
Looks good to me—  
Same as anyone else's, of course.  
Sometimes I hate Kinney McKenny  
Because he has such social prominence,  
And is above me in the church,  
And thinks he knows more than I;  
But at other times I almost love him,  
Because he is a man—  
Unaltered even in the altar—  
And makes the sexual thrills  
Run down my back  
When he gets fierce against the heretics  
In the pulpit Sunday mornings.

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

I think my love for Christ  
Is mainly sexual, too,  
But partly because he will save me  
From the Devil when I die.  
I hate all the women in the church,  
Especially the soloist  
And Kinney McKenny's wife and daughter.  
I am glad that his wife is a nervous wreck—  
Guess I helped some there!  
To be sure I smile on all of them,  
And they all smile on me,  
So lovingly!  
My life would be pretty miserable  
If it wasn't for the fact  
I know that Jesus will save me  
When the trumpet blows.  
Oh, I love Jesus, and Jesus loves me!

HENRY GUDE, THE SEXTON'S SONG

They gave me this job  
Because I needed it—  
Not out of sympathy but out of contempt.  
So that they could have someone  
To look down on and kick.  
Fine Christians they are,  
The whole damned bunch!  
I know more about each one  
Than I want to tell:  
Gossip is not my specialty,  
Like it is theirs.  
It makes me almost sick  
To ring the bells on Sunday morning—  
I see their superficialities, hypocrisy,  
And sin!  
They can not hide it from me,  
Though little they realize,  
Pretentious, superstitious fools,  
How much I see!  
Bing bong! there goes the double stroke—  
The signal for services to begin.  
Some day they'll have to try cashing in  
Their bogus checks,—  
Then there'll be some fun!

THE DEVIL'S CHORUS

Ah ha! they come to me  
With tear-begrimed and swollen faces,  
And plead for mercy.  
That pleases me!  
My mercy is a beautiful thing,  
Very much like what theirs was  
When they were on earth.  
Trying to pass off bogus checks  
Is a sinful crime, in my estimation,  
And I make them pay for it  
Whether they like it or no.  
I've had my eye sometime  
On Kinney McKenny's church —  
A rich harvest I'll get out of it!  
I guess the old maid will come first,  
Then the senior deacon,  
And after him the forward member;  
I may have to wait a little while  
For some of the others,  
But time is nothing to me  
Providing I pluck the fruits  
Of orthodoxy  
When they are ripe.  
I'll just enjoy  
Having Kinney down here with me—  
It does me good

## SONGS OF THE WORLD

---

To turn a trick on a hypocritical Scotchman.  
He's clever enough for the world,  
But he hasn't the ghost of a chance with me.  
If he was just a little shrewder  
Than he is,  
He'd know that a man who only turns his head  
To look at me  
Is mine!







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